

## **COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

DATE: November 8, 2005

CALLED TO ORDER: 5:05 p.m.

ADJOURNED: 6:40 p.m.

### **ATTENDANCE**

#### **ATTENDING MEMBERS**

Greg Bowes, Chair  
Patrice Abduallah  
Rozelle Boyd  
Jim Bradford  
Ginny Cain  
Susie Day  
Joanne Sanders

#### **ABSENT**

## **AGENDA**

**Consideration of County's Child Welfare Funding  
and Payments to Foster and Adoptive Parents**

## **Community Affairs Committee**

The Community Affairs Committee of the City-County Council met on Tuesday, November 8, 2005. Chair Greg Bowes called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. with the following members present: Patrice Abdullaah, Rozelle Boyd, Ginny Cain, Susie Day, and Joanne Sanders. Absent was Scott Schneider.

### **BUDGET HEARING**

#### **CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN HOME**

Rose Butler, Director of the Marion County Children's Guardian Home, distributed a handout with information regarding some minor changes to the budget after a discussion with the Controller's Office.

Ms. Butler stated that this time last year, the Guardian Home was faced with a nursery that was overflowing and there was a need for additional staffing. She stated that with the changes the Office of Family and Children (OFC) is going through with contracting additional providers for foster care, the Nursery is not the challenge that it was last year. She also stated that in the handout, there is a seven month comparison chart that shows how the admission numbers are lower this year than last. Ms. Butler stated that the Guardian Home is seeing an increase in the average daily population and the length of time the children are staying at the Home. She also stated that even though the overall numbers are down, the length of time the children are staying and the amount of days the children are at the Home are increasing. The staffing position that was developed for the Nursery has not been utilized as much but the Guardian Home has kept those positions.

Ms. Butler stated that one of the positions needed is the Assistant School Coordinator. The challenge that the Guardian Home is facing is when the children are coming into the Home. The turnaround of placing the children back at their original school is between 24 to 48 hours, which means there are between 12 to 15 different schools throughout the County that the Assistant Coordinator helps to make sure each child is getting on the bus for school, making sure medications go with them, and making sure they are picked up at school if there is a problem. Ms. Butler stated that there is a need for additional positions to help with the different dormitories. Ms. Butler also stated that part of the Guardian Home's responsibility as a shelter, is to have ongoing training for the staff. The majority of the staff has to have 20 hours of continual training and the Guardian Home has tried not to include those costs in the budget, but offset that in the private donor dollars that the Home receives. She also explained that the overtime to pay the staff is not offset through private donor dollars. More information discussed at the committee meeting is located in the handout.

(Clerk's Note: This packet, Exhibit A, is on file in the Clerk's office.)

Councillor Boyd asked, when a child comes into the Guardian Home, if that child has to return to the same school where he or she was first enrolled. Ms. Butler answered in the affirmative. Councillor Boyd asked what kind of transportation problems that

creates. Ms. Butler stated that it is a challenge because the Home deals with anywhere between 15 to 20 different schools. Councillor Cain asked if it would be more cost effective and helpful for everyone involved to bring a teacher or two to the Home. Ms. Butler stated that she had made inquiries to that very same subject, only to find that it cannot be done.

Chair Bowes asked what drove the total increase of \$100,209 when some of the other agencies are being asked to take a decrease to make ends meet countywide. Robert Clifford, City Controller, stated that the Guardian Home is funded about 50% from the OFC, and the other 50% comes from other sources. He also added that if the Controller's office were to cut the Guardian Home's budget from the OFC, the funds are likely to come from other sources. He also stated that the Guardian Home is required to feed the children and have a certain amount in attendance to provide medical care. Chair Bowes asked if the Health Insurance increase of \$60,545 was for employees. Councillor Sanders stated that if shifts were able to be made in the 2005 budget, those numbers may not look as large going into next year. She also stated that there are some items that are still pending and will move from the Auditor's budget having not been able to balance those figures; they have been deferred to the Administration and Finance Committee. Chair Bowes asked, if those adjustments are made in Administration and Finance, if the general idea is to basically keep the same funding as in 2005. Mr. Clifford answered in the affirmative stating that there was a change that did not get corrected in the budget. Kim Diller, Budget Manager, Controller's Office, stated that in the overtime line item the amount that is proposed is \$30,000, but due to a technical error, \$11,000 was omitted which should be in the Guardian Home's budget because it was after the Year To Date (YTD) numbers that were being used.

Councillor Abdullah asked if the 4.3% increase would be enough for the overall medical and support needs and would that increase be enough to carry without anticipating more children coming to the Guardian Home with some of the same problems. Ms. Butler stated that is one thing that the entire child welfare community has come together to discuss. She also stated that there is discussion whether to open an additional dormitory, which there is space for that will require additional funds. Ms. Butler also stated that medically the Home is doing very well with the contract from IUNG. They are able to obtain paybacks through the Medicaid system. So overall, the Home is hopeful that they are going to make it work.

Councillor Abdullah asked if there is a proactive way to meet some of the needs of the children, ahead of the curve, instead of waiting until a crisis occurs. Ms. Butler stated that it again goes back to the entire welfare community coming together to discuss the option of opening up another dormitory so that the Guardian Home is not turning children away. Councillor Abdullah asked Mr. Clifford if there was any way of going from 4.3 % to another one percent in order to meet those anticipated needs. Mr. Clifford stated that half of the Guardian Home's budget is funded through revenues received back from the State and Family and Children services. He also stated that is not enough money in the budget to anticipate another one or two percent increase. Some of the major agencies budgets

are increasing slightly to handle the jail overcrowding. He also stated that the Controller's Office has spent everything it has access to as far as revenue. Mr. Clifford added that there needs to be a wait-and-see approach for a new wing to be built and to see if that will be a savings to the County. Councillor Cain wanted some clarification as to whether there is already a space for an additional dormitory or if there is one being built. Mr. Clifford stated that there is already a dormitory there.

Councillor Boyd asked if, at the end of this budget process and all decisions have been made and if someone were to give the Guardian Home \$200,000 which didn't have to come before this committee, how would the money be spent. Ms. Butler stated that the boiler room is deteriorating and some of the windows are falling out. The gymnasium needs new doors, windows, and a cooling system that has not been updated in a number of years. There are future plans for upgrading the basement because when the renovations were done, the basement was not waterproofed.

#### Presentation from Noble of Indiana – Gino Santini

Gino Santini, Chairman of the Board of Directors for Noble of Indiana, stated that Noble's Board of Directors is not only composed of community and business leaders, but also of parents and consumers served by Noble. In the past couple of years, it has been a challenge to sustain that support financially, but also to assure the Council that it has been a wise investment that benefits the entire community. He also stated that over that last few years, Noble has merged its two Boards, closed a downtown administrative office, eliminated a satellite location, and consolidated the West satellite within Noble Industries located on Tibbs Avenue to promote efficiency while strengthening services to Indianapolis citizens with developmental disabilities and their families. Mr. Santini also stated that Noble adheres to the Better Business Bureau (BBB), Wise Giving Alliance, and 20 Standards of Excellence for philanthropic entities. He also stated that Noble's Board takes their role very seriously. Noble is an investment in the social and economic vitality of the community that pays huge dividends over time.

Mike Howland, Chief Executive Officer of Noble, stated that in the past year, Noble has served over 2,200 children, adults, and families. Noble's children's services continue to help hundreds of babies and toddlers with developmental delays, learning to talk, walk and reach other critical milestones. He also stated that through employment services, Noble is seeing great success. They have nearly 200 adults working in the community through Supported Employment, 94 performing contract assignments through Work Crews, and 154 fulfilling outsourcing jobs at Noble Industries. Mr. Howland stated that adults in the day programs are likewise learning, achieving and giving back through skills development and volunteer work. In the past year, those individuals have logged in approximately 11,000 volunteer hours. That has been accomplished while holding expenses down. Since 2003, Noble has increased the hours of service by 11%, and decreased staff costs per hour of services delivered by 19%. He also stated that more information regarding those trends is located in the handout.

(Clerk's Note: Exhibit B is on file in the Clerk's office.)

Mr. Howland stated that this year, Noble is respectfully requesting \$1million in continued support from the City-County Council. This represents a 5.5 percent cut from annual appropriations over the last 13 years. Noble's budget will increase 3.3 percent in 2006, but Noble recognizes the fiscal challenges faced and is looking forward to increasing fundraising, contract income, and fees to make up the difference in the budget over the next year. He also stated that Noble is planning to continue to increase the number of consumers working through employment services.

Mr. Howland stated that Noble is developing services targeted specifically to seniors with disabilities. He also stated that Noble is improving outreach to the Latino Community, which is believed to be an underserved population in Indianapolis. Through Children's Services, Noble plans to deliver 16,000 hours of therapy to babies and toddlers, a 33 % increase over 2005. Mr. Howland stated that the City-County Council and this committee play a key role in Noble's success. In partnership, they are enabling the people served to work, learn, grow, and achieve their goals and enrich the community.

Mollie Noble, Noble Board Member and consumer, stated that she has been with Noble for the past 4 years and thanks to them, she now has a full-time job, her own apartment and keeps a checkbook. She also stated that Noble has and is continuing to help her live more independently.

Mike Strohl, Treasurer of Citizens Gas, and Noble Board Member, stated that as a parent of a young daughter with Down syndrome, he thinks a lot about the future and what it holds for his daughter. Mr. Strohl also stated that he attends events and meetings and observes how Mollie and others are talking about their independence, and he thinks the future is bright. It takes a lot of people, work and money to provide the services that helps the children grow and provide them with the opportunities to live independently. Mr. Strohl stated that he is thankful for those who have worked hard to provide funding for Noble and said the contributions do make a difference.

Mr. Clifford stated that the budget included \$1 million for Noble. That is a 5.5 percent reduction over the previous year's contribution and is consistent with what was asked of other recipient agencies to take as a budget reduction in 2006 because of the funding problems. Chair Bowes asked what other subsidies are in the Auditor's budget. Mr. Clifford stated that it includes the \$105,000 in burials that the Auditor is responsible for, \$21,000 for Changes of Venue, and \$3.8 million for Mental Health. He also stated that the contribution is required under State law as percentage of the General Fund revenue for the County. Chair Bowes asked if the money that is being funded for Noble is something that is authorized by statute. Mr. Howland answered in the affirmative.

Councillor Sanders stated that the contribution made to Noble comes back to the community at-large from the individuals who train as well as the individuals who are

providing the training because overall, it is taking care of a population that needs much care.

Councillor Sanders stated that Noble does feed into different layers of the community. She also stated that she is very impressed with Noble and the Board members for the time they commit. Councillor Boyd asked if the contract income is inflation or market place based. Mr. Howland stated it is market place based.

With no further business pending, and upon motion duly made, the Community Affairs Committee of the City County Council was adjourned at 6:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Greg Bowes, Chair  
Community Affairs Committee

GB/law.